US Army Corps of Engineers®
Jacksonville District

MEDIA ADVISORY

Release No.: 08-54
Status: Important
P.O. Box 4970 Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019
Contact: Steven Wright
Phone: 904-232-1628 FAX: 904-232-2237
Email: steven.e.wright@usace.army.mil

FOR: ALL SOUTH FLORIDA MEDIA OUTLETS

TO: ALL EDITORS, NEWS DIRECTORS, REPORTERS

EVENT: STATUS OF LAKE OKEECHOBEE

WHEN: THURSDAY, AUGUST 28, 2008

The rise in Lake Okeechobee's level, caused by the effects of Tropical Storm Fay, has slowed. In the last week, the lake rose 1.8 ft., with a rise of 0.21 ft. in the last 24 hours. This compares to the largest tropical TS Fay-related 24-hour rise of .42 ft. on Aug. 20. Currently, the lake level stands at 14.02 ft. NGVD and is not expected to reach 15 ft. NGVD in the near term without further precipitation.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continues to keep its spillway gates at Moore Haven on the Caloosahatchee River and Port Mayaca on the St. Lucie Canal closed. By not releasing water from the lake, the Corps is helping to reduce the amount of flooding downstream from the lake in the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Canal drainage areas. Gates are open to release water at three Corps navigation structures downstream from the lake, to promote drainage of local basin runoff. These navigation structures are the St. Lucie Lock and Dam, Ortona Lock and Dam and the W.P Franklin Lock and Dam.

The Corps is closely monitoring potential tropical storm events that might bring additional rainfall to the Lake Okeechobee area. It is likely that the Corps will begin releases next week from Lake Okeechobee as flows subside in the Caloosahatchee River and St. Lucie Canal.

Rainfall in the Lake Okeechobee area could change plans for releasing water from the lake. No releases will be made if there is downstream flooding or high water levels on the Caloosahatchee River and/or St. Lucie Canal.

The Corps inspected the Herbert Hoover Dike after heavy rainfall from Tropical Storm Fay and found no significant issues with the dike as a result of the storm.

The target operating levels for the lake are between 12.5 and 15.5 ft, which is a safe range for the Herbert Hoover Dike structure.